

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 18, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We are writing to express our concern regarding the grave human rights situation and deterioration of the rule of law in Honduras. As the November 2013 elections draw near, we are particularly troubled by reports of corruption and extrajudicial killings.

Since June of 2009, international and Honduran human rights organizations have documented a pattern of violence and threats against journalists, human rights defenders, members of the clergy, union leaders, opposition figures, students, small farmers, and LGBT activists. There are also recent reports of death squads working with police, and in some cases consisting of on- or off-duty police, to kill gang members even after they surrender. The Honduran Congress created a "Directorate for Investigation and Evaluation of the Police Career" in December 2011 to address corruption and criminality in the police force, but it has turned out to be a disappointing failure. Only a handful of the hundreds of officers recommended for dismissal have been removed. The Honduran judiciary routinely fails to prosecute human rights violations, and many other crimes go unpunished.

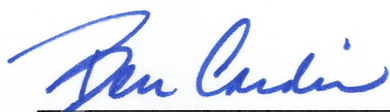
As you are aware, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 requires the State Department to investigate and report on whether the Honduran government "is implementing policies to protect freedom of expression and association, and due process of law," whether it is "prosecuting military and police personnel who are credibly alleged to have violated human rights," and whether the Honduran police and military "are cooperating with civilian judicial authorities in such cases" – prior to obligation of 20% of the funds designated for the Honduran military and police, with exceptions for the promotion of transparency, anti-corruption efforts, and the rule of law. Given the reported violence and impunity linked to state entities in Honduras, we have serious questions regarding the State Department's certification that these conditions were met for Fiscal Year 2012.

We respectfully request that the Department of State provide Congress with a detailed assessment of the efficacy of current Honduran government efforts to protect freedom of expression and association, the rule of law, and due process, and to investigate extrajudicial killings and abuses allegedly involving police and military personnel, particularly in the Bajo Aguan area. We also request that you conduct a thorough review to ensure that no U.S. assistance is provided to police or military personnel or units credibly implicated in human rights violations, and that top Honduran law enforcement officials are persons of integrity dedicated to protecting the rights of the Honduran people and upholding the rule of law. Lastly, we request that you make every reasonable effort to help ensure that Honduras' upcoming November 2013 elections are free, fair and peaceful.


As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee you firmly denounced human rights abuses in Honduras. As Secretary of State, we hope you will continue to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN  
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE  
United States Senator



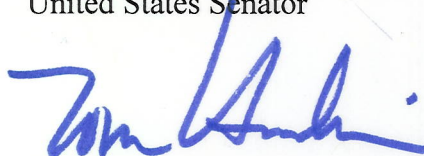
PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator



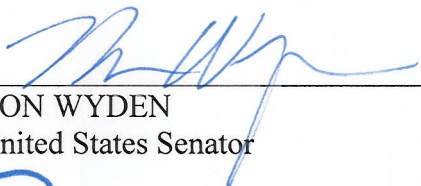
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI  
United States Senator



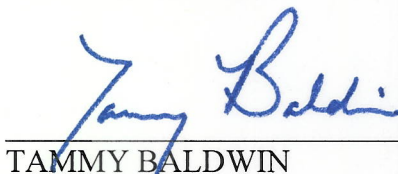
JEFF MERKLEY  
United States Senator



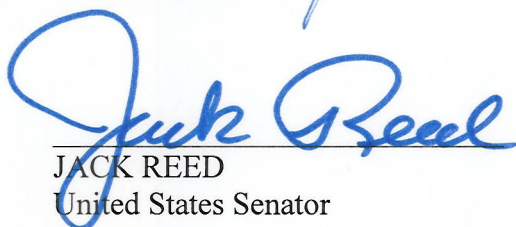
TOM HARKIN  
United States Senator



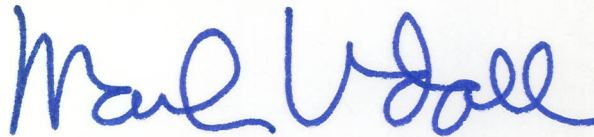
RON WYDEN  
United States Senator



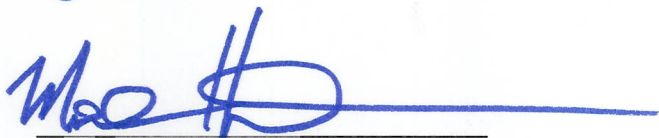
TAMMY BALDWIN  
United States Senator



JACK REED  
United States Senator



MARK UDALL  
United States Senator



MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senator

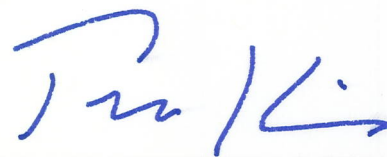


DEBBIE STABENOW  
United States Senator





ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.  
United States Senator



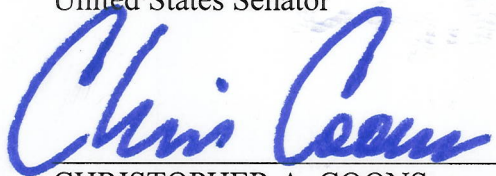
TIM Kaine  
United States Senator



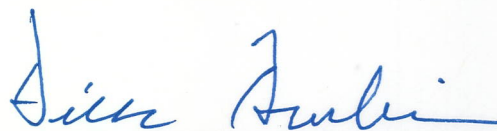
MICHAEL F. BENNET  
United States Senator



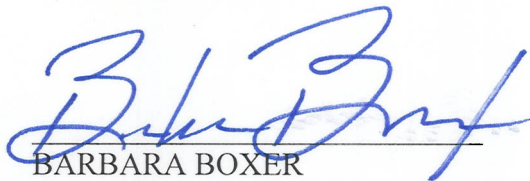
SHERROD BROWN  
United States Senator



CHRISTOPHER A. COONS  
United States Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN  
United States Senator



BARBARA BOXER  
United States Senator



AL FRANKEN  
United States Senator



JEANNE SHAHEEN  
United States Senator